

Forest Service seeks comment, announces public meetings on Alaska Roadless Rule

JUNEAU – The USDA Forest Service is seeking public comments and will host public information meetings as it prepares to develop a durable Alaska Roadless Rule to further Alaska’s economic development and other needs, while also conserving roadless areas for future generations.

Members of the public have until Oct. 15, 2018 to comment on the Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement. Instructions about how to comment are included in the online notice, which is posted here:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/08/30/2018-18937/roadless-area-conservation-national-forest-system-lands-in-alaska>

The Forest Service plans to host informational public meetings in Alaska and Washington D.C. in late September and early October. The full list of meetings, with dates, times and locations can be accessed here: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/roadmain/roadless/alaskaroadlessrule>

The State of Alaska, as a cooperating agency, will be hosting separate meetings to engage with the public.

“We are coordinating with the State of Alaska to develop an Alaska Roadless Rule that is responsive to the communities, businesses, and people who rely on the Tongass National Forest,” said Tongass Supervisor Earl Stewart. “By working together, we can ensure that this rule helps provide more economic opportunity for Alaskans while sustaining the health, diversity and productivity of the Tongass National Forest.”

On June 1, 2018, the Secretary of Agriculture committed the Forest Service to develop a state-specific rule that establishes management direction for roadless area conservation within the Tongass National Forest. In conducting the rulemaking process, USDA is responding to the State of Alaska’s petition requesting an exemption of the Tongass National Forest from the current standing national 2001 Roadless Rule.

An Alaska Roadless Rule would replace the 2001 Roadless Rule, which prohibits with some exception road construction, road reconstruction, and timber harvesting on certain National Forest System lands across the country.

For more information about this process, the project timeline and the schedule for public meetings, please visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/roadmain/roadless/alaskaroadlessrule>

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